NUMB. IX.

The SPECTATOR.

—Tigris agit rabidâ cum tigride pacem
Perpetuam, ſævis inter ſe convenit urſis. Juv.

Saturday, March 10. 1711.

MAN is ſaid to be a Sociable Animal, and, as an Inſtance of it, we may obſerve, that we take all Occaſions and Pretences of forming our ſelves into thoſe little Nocturnal Aſſemblies, which are commonly known by the Name of *Clubs*. When a Sett of Men find themſelves agree in any Particular, tho' never ſo trivial, they eſtabliſh themſelves into a kind of Fraternity, and meet once or twice a Week, upon the Account of ſuch a Fantaſtick Reſemblance. I know a conſiderable Market-town, in which there was a Club of Fat-Men, that did not come together (as you may well ſuppoſe) to entertain one another with Sprightlineſs and Wit, but to keep one another in Countenance: The Room, where the Club met, was ſomething of the largeſt, and had two Entrances, the one by a Door of a moderate Size, and the other by a Pair of Folding-Doors. If a Candidate for this Corpulent Club could make his Entrance through the firſt, he was looked upon as unqualifyed; but if he ſtuck in the Paſſage, and could not force his Way through it, the Folding-Doors were immediately thrown open for his Reception, and he was ſaluted as a Brother. I have heard that this Club, tho' it conſiſted but of fifteen Perſons, weighed above three Tun.

In Oppoſition to this Society, there ſprung up another compoſed of Scare-Crows and Skeletons, who being very meagre and envious, did all they could to thwart the Deſigns of their Bulky Brethren, whom they repreſented as Men of Dangerous Principles; till at length they worked them out of the Favour of the People, and conſequently out of the Magiſtracy. Theſe Factions tore the Corporation in Pieces for ſeveral Years, till at length they came to this Accommodation; that the two Bailiffs of the Town ſhould be annually choſen out of the two Clubs; by which Means the principal Magiſtrates are at this Day coupled like Rabbets, one fat and one lean.

Every one has heard of the Club, or rather the Confederacy, of the *Kings*. This grand Alliance was formed a little after the Return of King *Charles* the Second, and admitted into it Men of all Qualities and Profeſſions, provided they agreed in this Sir-name of *King*, which, as they imagined, ſufficiently declared the Owners of it to be altogether untainted with Republican and Anti-Monarchical Principles.

A Chriſtian Name has likewiſe been often uſed as a Badge of Diſtinction, and made the Occaſion of a Club. That of the *George's*, which uſed to meet at the Sign of the *George*, on St. *George*'s Day, and ſwear *Before George*, is ſtill freſh in every one's Memory.

There are at preſent in ſeveral Parts of this City, what they call *Street-Clubs*, in which the chief Inhabitants of the Street converſe together every Night. I remember, upon my enquiring after Lodgings in *Ormond-Street*, the Landlord, to recommend that Quarter of the Town, told me, there was at that time a very good Club in it; he alſo told me, upon further Diſcourſe with him, that two or three noiſy Country Squires, who were ſettled there the Year before, had conſiderably ſunk the Price of Houſe-Rent; and that the Club (to prevent the like Inconveniencies for the future) had thoughts of taking every Houſe that became vacant into their own Hands, till they had found a Tenant for it, of a Sociable Nature and good Converſation.

The *Hum-Drum* Club, of which I was formerly an unworthy Member, was made up of very honeſt Gentlemen, of peaceable Diſpoſitions, that uſed to ſit together, ſmoak their Pipes, and ſay nothing 'till Mid-night. The *Mum* Club (as I am informed) is an Inſtitution of the ſame Nature, and as great an Enemy to Noiſe.

After

After theſe two innocent Societies, I cannot forbear mentioning a very miſchievous one, that was erected in the Reign of King *Charles* the Second: I mean, *the Club of Duelliſts*, in which none was to be admitted that had not fought his Man. The Preſident of it was ſaid to have killed half a dozen in ſingle Combat; and as for the other Members, they took their Seats according to the Number of their Slain. There was likewiſe a Side-Table, for ſuch as had only drawn Blood, and ſhown a laudable Ambition of taking the firſt Opportunity to qualify themſelves for the firſt Table. This Club, conſiſting only of Men of Honour, did not continue long, moſt of the Members of it being put to the Sword, or hanged, a little after its Inſtitution.

Our Modern celebrated Clubs are founded upon Eating and Drinking, which are Points wherein moſt Men agree, and in which the Learned and Illiterate, the Dull and the Airy, the Philoſopher and the Buffoon, can all of them bear a Part. The *Kit-Cat* it ſelf is ſaid to have taken its Original from a Mutton-Pye. The *Beef-Steak*, and *October* Clubs are neither of them averſe to Eating and Drinking, if we may form a Judgment of them from their reſpective Titles.

When Men are thus knit together, by a Love of Society, not a Spirit of Faction, and don't meet to cenſure or annoy thoſe that are abſent, but to enjoy one another: When they are thus combined for their own Improvement, or for the Good of others, or at leaſt to relax themſelves from the Buſineſs of the Day, by an innocent and chearful Converſation, there may be ſomething very uſeful in theſe little Inſtitutions and Eſtabliſhments.

I cannot forbear concluding this Paper with a Scheme of Laws that I met with upon a Wall in a little Ale-houſe: How I came thither I may inform my Reader at a more convenient time. Theſe Laws were enacted by a Knot of Artizans and Mechanicks, who uſed to meet every Night; and as there is ſomething in them which gives us a pretty Picture of low Life, I ſhall tranſcribe them Word for Word.

RULES *to be obſerved in the* Two-penny Club, *erected in this Place, for the Preſervation of Friendſhip and good Neighbourhood.*

I. Every Member at his firſt coming in ſhall lay down his Two Pence.

II. Every Member ſhall fill his Pipe out of his own Box.

III. If any Member abſents himſelf he ſhall forfeit a Penny for the Uſe of the Club, unleſs in caſe of Sickneſs or Impriſonment.

IV. If any Member ſwears or curſes, his Neighbour may give him a Kick upon the Shins.

V. If any Member tells Stories in the Club that are not true, he ſhall forfeit for every third Lie an Half-Penny.

VI. If any Member ſtrikes another wrongfully, he ſhall pay his Club for him.

VII. If any Member brings his Wife into the Club, he ſhall pay for whatever ſhe drinks or ſmoaks.

VIII. If any Member's Wife comes to fetch him Home from the Club, ſhe ſhall ſpeak to him without the Door.

IX. If any Member calls another Cuckold, he ſhall be turned out of the Club.

X. None ſhall be admitted into the Club that is of the ſame Trade with any Member of it.

XI. None of the Club ſhall have his Cloaths or Shoes made or mended, but by a Brother Member.

XII. No Non-juror ſhall be capable of being a Member.

The Morality of this little Club is guarded by ſuch wholeſome Laws and Penalties, that I queſtion not but my Reader will be as well pleaſed with them, as he would have been with the *Leges Convivales* of *Ben. Johnſon*, the Regulations of an old *Roman* Club cited by *Lipſius*, or the Rules of a *Sympoſium* in an ancient *Greek* Author.

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